



Lee Review

2005

Featured Interviews:
Richard Jackson
Robert Barnett

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2005



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Poetry Editor

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Layout and Design

Hannah Hyder
Samantha Jones
Elise Young

Faculty Advisors

Dr. Chad Prevost
Dr. Donna Summerlin

Lee University
Department of English and Modern Foreign Languages
1120 N Ocoee St.
Cleveland, TN 37320

***Lee Review* Mission Statement**

Lee Review is published annually from the Department of English and Modern Foreign Languages at Lee University. As a Christian student literary magazine, we aspire to excellence in all things. We seek to balance our aims toward excellence by reaching out to a larger community beyond our campus while maintaining a continual focus on the student writers and artists here at Lee. We revel in the Creator God, and as created beings and co-creators, seek the most realized expressions of creativity, beginning with our campus. As a student literary magazine, we remain committed to the undergraduate student. The publishing world is small, and it is even smaller for the aspiring undergraduate. We want to afford a realistic and unique opportunity for such writers here at Lee, while maintaining the highest possible level of literary expression.

Submissions and Staff Interest

Lee Review welcomes submissions, primarily from Lee University students and alumni, during fall semesters. Decisions are made in the early to mid spring. We are interested in poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, essays, artwork, and photography. The submission deadline for the 2006 issue is November 23, 2005. Cover letters are preferred. For photography and art please provide a simple method for returning the work, and titles of each piece if they have them. Please include contact information, including email address, with each submission. We have an application process for those interested in serving on the editorial board of *Lee Review*. First preference goes to students who have some background in writing courses, and who are willing to commit for a full academic year. We are also always on the lookout for editors with Pagemaker capability. Contact Dr. Summerlin or Dr. Prevost for applications at dsummerlin@leeuniversity.edu and cprevost@leeuniversity.edu

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Safari

Serab Wanjiru Njoroge

"safari" is a Swahili word that means journey

Let me take you on Safari,
I might end your suffering
show you the colours of the rainbow,
its beauty might make you bow
gaze with you in the sunset
take your fears out of your closet
let me take you to Africa

Let me take you to Africa,
a taste better than paprika
Let your eyes meet with the lion's own,
find the strength that you own
see the beauty of the Zebra's stripes
realize the beauty your low esteem wipes
let me take you to the food chain

Let me take you to the food chain
an experience you will gain
the cheetah hunts the antelope
her life hangs on the rope
It is a co-existence
that calls for persistence
let me take you to the models of the jungle

Let me take you to the models of the jungle,
you might celebrate and tangle
the giraffe's long neck, the ostriche's long legs
You may learn image contentment, that your heart begs
The long neck reaches for greener leaves, long legs run for safety
raise your head high, make your confidence hefty
Let me take you to lessons you might learn from the animals of
the wild

Making Frequent Pilgrimage

Sabord Woods

A crumbling brick wall encloses seven graves,
Three generations resting within its
Guarding boundary. Frequently, I go on
Pilgrimage to . . . stand outside that grim
Perimeter and cast my imagination
Toward a dimming past strewn with bare
Memories of long-since-crumbled lives.

Now, just east of that rectangular fence,
A marble stone and low-set liner mark
A more recent start of collocation,
The massive center -stone offering cold facts
Regarding two lives – one just ended and the
Other fragilely persisting in an ever -less-
Inviting milieu. . . . According to ancient plan
Four should lie frigidly beneath four slices
Of cool stone there. Within a few years
The declared plan must will itself to
Fruition,
Past reaching from the grave to order
Present and future.

For now, I make pilgrimage,
Briefly , boldly , invading sad privacy ,
Brooding passed lives into shadowy being,
Recalling now-cancelled warmth and long-absent
Gesture of relation, willing to the edge of
Realization (and then letting go)
A motion, a memory , a feeling,
A lost connection.

Due west of this moldering brick enclosure
Stand six small decaying stick crosses. Unnamed
Ancestors – all surnamed Geor ge – decayed
Decades ago, once were placed beneath
These stark reminders of yesteryear .
Now not one resident nearby bears this

Crucial appellation, when once three thousand
Acres, burying ground at its edge,
Bore George dwellings and gardens and
Lives. Now close cousins bear the blood
But not the name, also showing, with none to see,
Long-since generated traits, bents of nature,
Casts of mind, crosses of intent, while making
Silent pilgrimage, paying humble homage,
Then adding to the count as march of years,
Unstopping, sweeps all toward frozen silhouette,
Framed in minds of later pilgrims, still
Giving pause at edge of crumbled wall.

-August 17, 1995

Alternative History

Kevin Brown

If Hitler would have become an artist,

and

Einstein had worked as a watchmaker,

would we not have found ways to

pound enemies into submission
with paintings

and

to wage war
by winding our watches,

always making sure the
trains arrived on time?

Rest Stop #4 and Off Again

Amber Noel

He bags the doughnuts hot at five,
but no one eats at five except
faces double-yellow lined, noses
smeared with hours of bored noises like Norse
and nights of license plate bingo.

Wax paper, wet with glaze, crackles as
he balances twenty black ounces
of hazelnut steam, thinking in colors
of soft-rock headache, of deejay déjà-vu:
What makes a cream specifically Irish?

Freeway shadows slice the leather seats,
the light a white and startled line
across a sleeping cheek. He doesn't
want to, licks his teeth and shifts to drive.

Two cramped thighs later, he strokes the rim
of cold Styrofoam, whispers a one-up
to the slack lips on his rolled-up jacket
armrest, to the breathing, the husky-gray
sweatpants: *Charm. That's what.*

He laughs at this and sneezes. Eyes,
splitting slowly at the whites, open
to the empty bag, squint through shards of sun
and broken glaze. She, awake, hotly hungry
and ignored, percolates a secret.

Breezeway

Amber Noel

When things fit together like nights of clean air,
dryer sheet smell, except
cooler and more blue than questions,
open the door
but

be ready to realize that you can't have today
without color.

There:

green leaves on that potted plant bobbing,
blue plastic grocery sack ballooning
over shrubs and the heads of unshaven
seminary students. The breeze spins mood in a
purple pinwheel.

Here comes the gray stocking cap, the man with fat glasses,
the man with common hands and the no-name face.
He rides his blue bike past the window,
but
you still can't get over those green leaves: umbrellas
over slick, whippy stems, the sun telling each vein
to everyone.

If you could squeeze that green light into a green jelly, you'd eat it
on toast every
Monday and Wednesday and wear a green shirt so that drips
wouldn't show on the
sleeves or cotton pockets.

Again:

the breeze grazing like cool kisses and
lukewarm tea, it smells of mint leaves
on ice, still flirting with blond-haired
March.

It's days like this, with color winning, you could drop your life
and drive a yellow ice cream truck.

To the Hobos

Cara Edenfield

Who have ridden
dreams to train stations,
who have surrendered last names
and hometowns,
who slipped and laughed and sweated
in boxcars, truck beds, back seats,
braved strangers while stumbling through DT's
on feverish interstates.

You who have twisted your hair into thick locks
have given up college and fine dining,
traded in Monday-through-Fridays,
hour lunches, eight-to-fives, power ties
and vacations in Florida for
the ever unfamiliar dawn.

You have shared with hippies and dogs
your spoiled meat and red bandanas, still shaky
with no memory of River Street in March...
whose visions are so alive they kick.

We feel sorry for you on the side;
we wonder what went wrong in you,
which sprocket cracked in works.

Somewhere parents or lovers drift without you,
high school friends, somewhere the cops remember you,
the grandmother you were named for, the people who
have been cruel and the roads you learned to drive on
before you threw up your hands to what we war for –
somewhere there is an old friend who wishes for you
over coffee.

We say, *is that freedom?*

Whisper, *tell us the secret of the road, what finally made you go for good?*

Silently, to our shadow-selves, *can we go too, if only for a little while?*

You, the nomad, could teach us, the narcotized, the lyrics

to the freedom song sung on railroad ties.
Speak to the wanderer in us,
staring at you on the road safely
under the wheels of our SUV's
on our way to work Monday morning.

Locomotion

Cara Edenfield

i thought love was a train.
i watched you race arrogantly
past for many days,
leaving me
believing you'd split me open
on your tracks.

now I want to ride you into
mexico
into next year
away from nails, away from pain
and let you leave me mangled
on the rails,
dear runaway.

The Light Went Out in Your Eyes

Cara Edenfield

Broke, busted and disgusted,
like a thousand camels and their thousand
broken dreams carrying a thousand weeping widows
down grey streets.
On the black tracks running down dark dawns
and the angry train racing away, crying in the night
restless and without a home.
It is a lump in the throat.
It just costs too much and I swear
I have nothing to live off of anymore
A nickel – and – diming junkie all
blood and babble
all sick men and rotting girls
dragging forgotten children down lonely roads
at midnight, past wandering bars
past alleys, past trash and all the lonely people who call
their own, past the cops and
everyone's open hands – closed off suns,
twisted dawns pumping up the color for all the free people,
here we sit without hope, no bluebird's song ringing
closed windows, closed skies, black-hearted woman
with glass in her eyes,
and shut up houses with no grace that squeezes through.



Dustin Nicholson

What a Good Son Does

Jonathon Wilson

“You can’t be serious.”

“My God can do all things.”

“Your God didn’t exist until two years ago, Mom.”

They fell silent. Mel listened to her ventilator pushing the air in and out. The bedroom smelled neutral, disinfected - like a hospital. He could see the tears starting to well up around the edges of her eyes.

“Mom, don’t cry. I’m going to do it. I just don’t understand it.”

The crowning tears subsided as quickly as they had appeared.

“It won’t hurt a bit, son. I promise. Preacher’s a nice man.”

“I’m sure. Just don’t get your hopes up, OK?”

“It’s not hope.”

Mel had learned to skirt these kinds of comments since her sensational conversion. He kissed her on the forehead and turned out the light.

“Goodnight, Mom. Get some sleep. I love you.”

He sat down at the kitchen table and called his roommate.

Everything was fine. His assignments had been e-mailed. No girls had called. No parties missed. He hung up and sat staring at the light blue napkin rings. The napkin rings were Mel’s reality, not this God of hers. Nothing else seemed to matter to her anymore. But the doctor said any day now. So tomorrow would be his first church service and he wasn’t going to be wading in the shallow end. For Mel, it would be the diving board.

* * *

SUNNY HILL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Join Us – Sun. Morn. 10:30am

Sun. Night. 6:30pm

Wed. 7:00pm

THE BREAD OF LIFE NEEDS NO BUTTER

The sign was lying. The church wasn’t even on a hill. How preposterous that this was his mother’s place of refuge. It had to be some kind of final prank. She was going out with a bang. It was how she always dreamed it would be. “Very funny, Mom.”

Mel stepped out of his car and shuffled slowly toward the building. The double glass doors at the top of the brick steps flung

open. They had spotted him for what he was – a visiting sinner dangling above the open mouth of hell.

The usher at the door was tall and had a very peculiar shape – bulbous, like a Mr. Potato Head with long legs. His thinning hair stretched in peppered strips from ear to ear. It looked as though a large hand had gripped his head like a ball. His crooked tie exposed a neglected button on his shirt through which a nest of black curls had worked their way into the sunlight. He held the door, nodded and let out an enthusiastic “Welcome.”

An extremely well groomed man in a nice suit was walking toward Mel, smiling broadly.

“Welcome. Welcome. I’m the pastor here. Leonard Locke. So glad to have you with us this morning. Lord bless you.”

“Thanks” said Mel, forcing a smile.

Pastor Locke whirled around toward the sanctuary and threw his hands wildly into the air, shouting like a Wall Street broker before the closing bell. “Well glory, thank ya Jesus,” then some loud gibberish Mel couldn’t understand. Mel stood beside the usher, hand over his mouth, eyes wide and feet turned toward the door.

Then, without warning, the usher’s voice boomed out through the vestibule “Yes Lord. He is good.” He left his post and followed Pastor Locke into the sanctuary, clapping his hands and laughing boisterously. Mel put his hand on the door and stood looking outside for a moment, wanting to leave but knowing he couldn’t.

Mel sat on the back pew while Pastor Locke directed the congregation through ancient hymns, pumping one fist as if playing paper, rock, scissors with the air. Every now and then his head wiggled loosely and his hands shot into the air. Mel laughed to himself. The teenagers across the pew laughed too, but for completely different reasons.

The bulbous usher was walking toward Mel, laughing his unmistakable laugh that rose above the feverish discord of the congregation. He presented a brass plate with a felt bottom. Mel put his hand out to say no thanks, but the usher just looked at him, befuddled. One of the teenagers reached over and took the plate, dropped a dollar onto the felt and passed it to his friends. Mel’s first collection plate. Now he understood. He looked around for his mother, expecting her to be watching him, full of pity, from the other side of the room.

But she was not there, and he knew it. He knew that in just moments he was going to have to stand up in front of all these psychotic people. He was going to have to walk to the head of the sanctu-

ary in front of all these psychotic people. Then he was going to have to be prayed for, in his mother's place, by all these psychotic people.

* * *

"My God is the healer. I said my God is the healer. Amen?" A resounding echo came from the audience, accompanied by zealous applause and a bass drum kicking frantically. The drummer closed his eyes as he twirled one stick in the air above his head. Pastor Locke stepped down from the pulpit and paced between the altar benches. "The Bible says if any man is sick among you let him call upon the elders of the church. The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up. Do you believe it this morning? Then let us make our petitions known now in the name of Jesus. Does anyone have any spoken requests? Any needs they want to take before the throne? Yes, Sister Maggie."

An old woman with wool-like hair and a white shawl stood up and half spoke, half bawled a plea for her son, who had started drinking.

Mel didn't feel sorry for her or her son. He was afraid of her, of an old woman wearing a butterscotch-scented shawl. An old woman who had broken down in front of everyone and started weeping for the hopeless soul of her alcoholic son.

"Sister Maggie, I want you to come down here. I feel like the Lord has something planned for your boy this very day. Even in this very hour, the Lord is stretching out his hand into that bedroom where your boy is sleeping away that hangover. Sister April, Sister Faye, Brother Todd, come on down here and let's lay hands on Sister Maggie on behalf of her son. My blessed God I feel His presence here this morning."

Mel, too, had noticed a presence, but it definitely wasn't God. He was getting a demonstration of what his mother had asked of him, and the fear that had been a tight ball in the bottom of his throat had now fallen into his stomach. "This should not be hard," he thought to himself. "If I love my mother at all, this should not be hard." But his stomach had been left out of this pep talk and decided to vocalize its own fears. Mel put his hands over his mouth, ran out of the sanctuary and crashed through the men's room door. He vomited all over the urinal cake and collapsed, hugging porcelain.

"I can't do this. I'm sorry, Mom. I'm so sorry, Mom. Why do you

have to be so twisted, God? Why can't you run things in a way that makes sense? It's all so absurd. It's absurd that my mom even talks to you. It's absurd that I'm here right now, retching in one of your holy urinals. It's absurd that my mom is dying at the age of forty-five, and it's absurd that she doesn't blame you. Because it is your fault. If you're everything she says you are then it is *your* fault."

"Everything OK out here?" The bulbous usher was walking out of the handicap stall.

Mel stood quickly and wiped his face with his sleeve. "I'm sorry. I didn't know anybody was in here."

"That's alright. You're Trish's boy aren't you?"

"Yeah. Did she tell you I was coming?"

"She might've mentioned it. Plus you look just like her. I didn't wanna say nothing before. You looked pretty nervous as it was." That laugh again, echoing from the tile. He reached out and shook Mel's hand firmly. "Will Randall. Call me Brother Randy if you want. Everybody else here does."

"I'm Mel."

"Glad to meet you. You know, I couldn't help overhearing that little prayer of yours."

"Yeah, sorry about that. I hope I didn't offend you or anything"

"I wasn't the one you were yelling at, son." Brother Randy laughed and pulled a pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket. "You smoke? Wanna go outside for a spell and get some air? I sure could use some myself."

"Actually, yeah I would. I've wanted to leave ever since I got here anyway."

"Well it's not for everybody. Come on out here and let's have a smoke."

Mel and Brother Randy walked out into the vestibule and passed through the muffled noises of violent prayer and Pastor Locke's sparse shouting in strange languages. Brother Randy held the heavy glass door open for Mel as he tucked two cigarettes loosely between his lips. He lit both cigarettes and handed one to Mel. He sat down on the bottom brick step and blew a stream of smoke from his nostrils.

"You're in college right? Up north?"

"Michigan State. I'm a Psychology major, if you couldn't tell from that little episode a minute ago."

Brother Randy laughed. "Hey, everybody's gotta yell sometimes. It's good for you. Lets out the steam." He made a whistling sound and

laughed again.

“Yeah well, I wasn’t just blowing off steam. I meant it. Every word.” He pulled back on the cigarette gently, slowly filling his cheeks with smoke, then sucked it down and let it settle in his lungs as he stared across the road at the abandoned Sunday morning park. “Besides, I’m sure you know how ridiculous all this is.”

“Well, it’s hard to say, really. There’s been times I thought to myself, Randy, what the hell are you doing? You’re as crazy as all these other people around here. And I guess I am.”

“But why? If you know this is crazy then why are you still doing it? Why wouldn’t you look for something else that makes more sense?”

“What makes more sense than this, son? If God’s real, then I figure He must’ve made us. Who better to ask why you’re here than the one who put you here to begin with? It’s just plain old common sense.” He tapped his head with two fingers and took another pull from his cigarette. “Death is coming whether you blame it on God or not. And if you want to live a happy life, then you’ve gotta be willing to accept that and get on with it. Take it from a man who *has* lived a happy life.”

“I don’t know. It’s just all a bit too convenient. But you seem to be happy so I guess it’s not completely ridiculous. It’s just when I look at my mom and see her with that machine attached to her and she’s reading the Bible and praying – it just makes her seem like some sort of a traitor. Like she’s left her allies to be with the enemy that’s still shooting at her.”

Brother Randy flicked his cigarette butt under a blue station wagon and stood. “It sounds to me like you’re the only one still shooting, son.”

“No, that’s not what I meant. It’s just such a drastic change. She used to think religion was silly. Hokey she called it. She never made me go to church growing up. She used to tell me Christians were ignorant, backstabbing hypocrites who hated more people than they loved. But then when she found out she had this disease it was like she forgot herself. Now all she talks about is God and God’s people and blah blah blah blah blah.”

“You don’t want her to hate people, do you? Nobody ought to die with hate inside of them. It’s just not a fitting thing.” Brother Randy leaned against the station wagon and lit another cigarette. “You know?”

Mel snuffed his cigarette out on the bottom of his shoe and leaned against the metal railing of the stairs. “I don’t want her to hate anybody. It’s just that I used to be the one thing in this world that she

loved more than herself. And now, it's like she loves this religion of hers as much as she loves me. It's just... I don't know what I'm trying to say. I guess I feel replaced. I feel like I don't matter to her anymore."

"You do matter to her, son. Hell, over half the talks I've had with Trish have been about you. She loves you more than I can figure. But she loves God, too. She loves God more than most I've seen. And I can't really explain it. I guess sometimes it just takes a change to make a change. But don't feel like she don't love you as much as she did before, because it ain't true."

"In my head I know you're right. I just don't feel it. I can't understand her anymore. She's foreign. And now she's sent me out here to make a fool out of myself in front of all these crazy people. No offense. And it just doesn't seem like something a loving mother would do to her son. It's sadistic."

"You're thinking about this the wrong way, son. This don't have nothing to do with you. This is about her. You're just her legs. You're here to do what she can't do. And that's where you have to decide on who's more important. You or your mom."

Mel stood up straight and jammed his fists into his pockets. He looked down at his shoes and shuffled his feet from side to side. "I don't know. I guess I am being selfish. I just want to be there for her, you know? Why can't I just be there for her without thinking about myself all the time?"

Brother Randy laid a hand on Mel's shoulder. "Your mom needs you to do this for her. And even if you don't understand why, at least understand that part of it. You don't got to believe it. You just have to do it for *her*. Just be a good son." He dropped his hand from Mel's shoulder and winked. "That's all you *can* do, right?"

Mel hesitated and gritted his teeth. "Fine. I mean, what choice do I have? I can't ever face her again if I don't do this." He looked at his shoes again and kicked his toes against the pavement. He turned slowly, stepped on the bottom brick step, and then flung himself the rest of the way up the stairs and through the glass doors.

* * *

"Anybody else need prayer before we move on with the service? I feel the Spirit moving in this house this morning. He's here, folks. Don't let him pass you by. Don't let him pass you by. Praise God. Yes, son. What do you need from the Lord today?"

Mel did not speak. He stood face to face with Pastor Locke. “This is Trish’s boy.” Brother Randy stepped from behind Mel and nodded to Pastor Locke.

Pastor Locke grinned. “Let’s gather around this young man here today. He’s standing in for Sister Trish, who we all know is very sick. Come on let’s pray for her now.”

Mel felt Pastor Locke’s sweaty hand touch him between the eyes, and then others joined from behind, rubbing his back and gently gripping his arms. He heard the shouted prayers and commands – “God make this sickness leave her body in the name of Jesus. Heal!”

Mel closed his eyes and smiled because he was a good son, and because he knew that the sickness would leave her body – one way or the other.



Rachelle Barr

The Harsher Side of Motherhood

Ashley Katherine Denning

Every day when I walk to lunch
I see a plump brown bird
sitting on the tennis court fence, obviously
guarding her nest in the bush below her.

She sits instead of perching, her head hard to distinguish
from the rest of her round body, and lets out a short whistle –
longer than a chirp and not too high-pitched.

Behind the facade of her motherly figure
and simple, camouflaged dress, there is a stronger,
harsher side of motherhood that peers at me
through her unremarkable eyes
and tells me to stay away from her babies.

Gold Fever

Ashley Katherine Denning

The treasure summons you again
from beneath the liquid tomb
where sunken Spanish galleons,
18th-century warships,
booty from WWII and East Indiamen
lie preserved in the groaning waves.
You know the frustration, you know the
risk of results ranging
from bonanza to bankruptcy,
but you can't seem to shake the
febris auris
that wakes you at night
and makes your mind clammy
until you flick on the lights
and make plans for another sail,
another dive, another dig.
With the fortune you invest in salvage gear,
airlifts, water jets, detectors,
you hope you turn up more
than a few doubloons
when you *grope for the bottom*
and dig with both hands,
fingers arched like gaping hooks.
This time
you could find the mother lode:
Atocha off the Marquesas Keys,
some evasive treasure you've toiled for
and watch it rise to the surface
to dazzle you with its almost untouchable gleam.

Coconut Lime Verbana

Katie Gee

Oranges were the size of melons
Falling off the dwarfed trees.
Ohio is frozen over,
But the San Diego sun
Beats down like the drums
From a stereo in the bedroom.

I love the steepness
Of the hills,
The streets, and the cash.
Such a mixture of poverty and fame
Is intriguing.
On the beach a chubby white boy plays.
Toe-numbing water
Will not ruin his vacation.

Shanties and casinos mesh along
A street with an arsenal and
11 barbershops filled with Marines.
One, rock solid, wearing neon
Smiles as the Escape passes.
Their ship recently docked in the harbor.

20 minutes inland is the house
With the citrus grove of lemons, oranges.
Miles away, I still smell the state
Of coconut lime verbana.

Sleep

Claire Sulser

Sleep, for you do not know the hour of awakening.
Wake the dead and ask them when the light went out.
It went with them.

These walls have mysteriously crumbled
and as you step to the other side
you wonder why your heart beats in your shoulder.

Who made this star,
whose light only reflects itself?

And you wonder how you became so selfish.

And as time fades your oily skin becomes dry and wrinkled
and you begin to wonder why the feeling is seeping from your
fingers.

Your muscles, once strong and dependable, have weakened with
time.

You could have held the world on your shoulders,
but you were too busy stacking weights to prove that you could.
You're still breathing.

The light has gone out.

Turning a Language of Death into a Language of Life: an Interview with Richard Jackson



Richard Jackson is the author of 9 books of poems, most recently *Half Lives: Petrarchan Poems* (Autumn House, 2004), *Unauthorized Autobiography: New and Selected Poems* (Ashland Poetry Press, 2003), *Heartwall* (UMass, 2000 Juniper Prize), *Svetovi Narazen* (Slovenia, 2001), a limited edition small press book, *Falling Stars: A*

Collection of Monologues (Flagpond Press, 2002) and *Richard Jackson: Greatest Hits* (2004), and several chapbooks of translations. His own poems have been translated into a dozen languages. He has edited two anthologies of Slovene poetry: *The Fire Under the Moon* and *Double Vision: Four Slovenian Poets* (Aleph, '93) and edits an eastern European Chapbook series, *Poetry Miscellany* and *mala revija*. He is also the author of a book of criticism, *Dismantling Time in Contemporary American Poetry* (Agee Prize), and *Acts of Mind: Interviews With Contemporary American Poets* (Choice Award). His several dozen essays and reviews have appeared in *Georgia Review*, *Verse*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Boundary 2*, *Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner* and numerous other journals, as well as anthologies such as *The Planet on the Table: Writers Reading* (2003) and *John Ashbery* (ed. Harold Bloom, 2004). In addition, he has written introductions to books of poems by four different Slovene Poets for various presses, and a special Slovene issue of *Hunger Mountain* (2003). He has also edited a special 50 page section of *Poetry International* (2004) on William Matthews with an introductory essay. He won a *Prairie Schooner* Reader's Choice Award and the *Crazyhorse* prize. In 2000 he was awarded the Order of Freedom Medal for literary and humanitarian work in the Balkans by the President of Slovenia and has received Guggenheim, NEA, NEH, 2 Witter-Bynner and Fulbright Fellowships, and 5 Pushcart Prizes. He has won teaching awards at UT-Chattanooga and Vermont College (MFA program).

When I first read some of Richard Jackson's poetry about a year ago, I was amazed at the way images press into each line, force their way in a long queue into each stanza. Images are what set his poems apart, which is an odd thing to say, because imagery is virtually a prerequisite for poetry. His images, though, are greater in number and quality than

most. They don't seem forced or predetermined, but seem to rise naturally out of a certain situation or idea or mood because they're part of the way the poet thinks. I became even more convinced of this when he gave a reading at Lee University last spring. I had noticed the images when I read his work, of course, but his poems seemed even more packed when he read them. This is the advice he gave to the student audience: "Listen to the images." (Surprise, surprise!) "Try to get a sense of how they fit together. It's like listening to a song for the first time; you don't get everything, but that's ok." I listened, and have continued to listen ever since. This interview was conducted by email in October, 2004.

Luke Hankins: *Even a cursory look at your poetry reveals one thing – your poems are long. Is the fact that your poems are on the long end of the spectrum of contemporary poetry important to you? How is the length an asset and how is it a drawback?*

Richard Jackson: When I began writing my poems were small – short, imagistic poems dense with similes and metaphors. After a while I took up photography and began to see that the pictures were doing a better job at capturing images. I was also having more fun at the time writing essays. As a result of those two things I started to write discursive poems, first by combining shorter ones that would now be sections. I had Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" as a sort of model. The way I have always thought has been to counterpoint things – so instead of counterpointing images I started to counterpoint discursive bits, narrative fragments. When you start to do that, use one fragment to define another, things start to build, get longer. But it also starts to lead you to see things in a larger way, to see contexts you didn't see before. I don't really see length as an asset or drawback: the poem has to be the right size to deal with whatever presents itself. I have a whole book, just out, of Petrarchan sonnets, for example. Now most of my longer poems work faster though just as lengthy in that they counterpoint, often in a surreal way, images, but unlike the images that were in the earlier poems, they make a sort of subtext story, a narrative of images.

LH: *Your poems are full of the consciousness of war and suffering in the world.*

You say, in "The Head of the Devil" in your book Alive All Day, "whoever you are, / there is no sense trying to escape this world." Do you think that our society tries to "escape this world," and if so, in what ways? What role should the poet play in such a society?

RJ: I think our society is very naïve. A few million children around the world die each year from preventable sickness. There are a few dozen wars in the world at any given time. Terrorism, torture, oppression exist in all parts of the globe. Poverty affects hundreds of millions. When I worked with the PEN peace Committee in Slovenia I learned about things like this that would turn your stomach. We escape this so easily: just look at the ads on TV, so unreal. Here we are worried about what the new car models will look like, or the most convenient way to package a new food, the newest fashions. Our ethical system in many ways is based upon materialism, upon gaining material things. There's a TV show called "Survivor" which given all those things I mentioned above is simply obscene. Or the MTV "Real World" – those kids haven't the slightest idea of what the real world is.

What role should the poet play? In our materialistic world the poet doesn't have as much of a role as in, say South America, or Europe, where poets become spokespersons, even heads of state. That's hard to imagine. At a poetry conference I went to in Macedonia, in former Yugoslavia two years ago, there was an audience of 10,000. 1,500 were crammed into a huge auditorium, and they had multi-screen TVs, like at Riverbend, scattered around the banks of a river outside! The audience included ambassadors and other politicians.

I think in America we have a creeping dark force, and that is materialism. Too often we measure our values by who has how much – just today there was a list of the ten richest, an article in the paper that took precedence over the slaughter going on in the Sudan. What does that say about us? But there is the hope that maybe writers can offer some vision that is different. I think that is why Oprah Winfrey has that book program: she realizes how important it is. This is why, for instance, Nobel prize winning Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz writes: "whoever wields power is also able to control language and not only with the prohibitions of censorship but also by changing the meaning of words. A peculiar phenomenon makes its appearance: the language of a captive community acquires certain durable habits; whole zones of reality cease to exist simply because they have no name...Only if we assume that a poet constantly strives to liberate himself from bor-

rowed styles in search of reality is he dangerous.” It is not just subject matter, then, but the very nature of poetry that is the issue here. Robert Hass, the American poet, writes: “Because rhythm has direct access to the unconscious, because it can hypnotize us, enter our bodies and make us move, it is power. And power is political. That is why rhythm is always revolutionary ground. It is always the place where the organic rises to abolish the mechanical and where energy announces the abolition of tradition. New rhythms are new perceptions.” And here is Stanislaw Baranczak, another Polish poet: “regardless of theme and specific address, poetry is always some kind of protest....That’s why all the metaphors and rhythms – it’s just a way of putting the world’s chaotic gibberish in some meaningful order and restoring the original weight to abused words. That’s why all the concreteness and conciseness – to resist the engulfing power of the world’s empty abstractions and statistical generalities. That’s why all the speaking in first person singular and seeing things from a strictly individual perspective – it’s poetry’s way of standing up to the world whenever it tries to elbow the individual aside and of the stage.” And so, as Joseph Brodsky, the 1987 Nobel Prize winning poet, has written: “With a poet, one’s ethical posture, indeed one’s very temperament, is determined by one’s aesthetics.”

LH: *Do you find it necessary to discipline yourself in order to get your writing done? If so, what are some of the things you do to make sure you’re productive?*

RJ: I’m as lazy as anyone, and my main weakness is old movies, the history channel and Law and Order. There, it’s out. I also love music – classical, jazz, rock, country, bluegrass – and opera – a bit of everything – sort of like my poems. I am always taking notes, though, and I translate a lot, mostly from Italian, especially when nothing of my own seems to be coming out. Or I read, or do a book review or essay. Teaching usually fires me up, gets me thinking imaginatively, so I sort of feed off these things.

LH: *You’ve been involved with Slovenian poets for a long time. How did this get started? What are some of the most significant influences of your experience with them and their country?*

RJ: I was a Fulbright Exchange poet to former Yugoslavia, Serbia really, in 1986. I went back the next year, took some students, and have gone

back each year with more students, but mostly to Slovenia, where I met a bunch of writers who immediately seemed like old friends, and Croatia. There are two conferences, one in May and one in September that I go to most years in Slovenia by myself. I've also traveled a lot to Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, usually for literary reasons, and England, Germany, Austria. I get to Italy at least once a year in connection with my translation projects. I really love Slovenia and Italy: the mountains of Slovenia – I stay in the Alps on an alpine lake – and all the culture and art in Italy. Experiencing another culture, living in it for a bit, really broadens one's view of the world, of one's writing. The Slovenes are a very literate society: it would be like going into a Bi Lo and asking the cashier about Emily Dickinson, and then having her recite a few poems. All their statues are to writers, scientists, artists, musicians, philosophers, religious thinkers – no politicians or military people. A lot of the places, and stories around them, have entered my poems, my teaching, my way of thinking.

LH: *Where do you think poetry is headed in the 21st century? Are you optimistic about the overall direction of poetry, as you perceive it? Do you see a lot of talent and originality? Have you noticed any major trends or practices that are disturbing? Any that are reassuring?*

RJ: American poetry, despite the fact that few in America read it, is influential around the world. More people from around the world read our poets than from within our own country, easily. It is a rich poetry with numerous influences – geographic, ethnic, gender-wise, philosophical, mythic, narrative, formal, etc. – and at its best all these rich melting pot influences make for a deeply resonant poetry. Yes, it's true that sometimes some in these groups listen only to themselves, but that's not true of the better poets. This richness of vision is a valuable export our country has, but which our country doesn't realize. Some of our best poems have a sense of justice, equality and morality that is the basis for what this country was founded on, and it's too bad that isn't better exported. I was in Prague this past summer and you could sense that – the people were really amazed at some of our poets. I think our younger poets, the ones still in graduate schools and just starting out are doing a lot of interesting things. The only poetry I feel doesn't do anything like this is the so called "language poetry" which is mostly hermetic and about itself.

LH: *In your poem, "Objects in This Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear," from your book Heartwall, you write, "Maybe we can love / / not just within the darkness, but because of it..." The reader finds such philosophical considerations throughout your work. Will he or she find an essentially hopeful philosophy underlying your poetry's vivid, realistic picture of our war-filled world?*

RJ: No matter how horrible the things that get mentioned in a poem, it is not the subject per se but the process of thinking, the structure, that is most important. I think the very fact that one CAN write about such things means someone has come to grips with them, understood them, and this is the first way of dealing with them. In that poem, which was modeled on an ode by Horace, the speaker tells first the horror story, then turns to his wife and remembers some things between them, and about his father, stories that counter that horror, and with that, hopes that some same sort of humanity might be infused into such a horrific situation. So the poem tries to fight its way through some sort of depressing ending. That to me is a pattern meant to show a way out of a hopeless situation. It is a way of turning a language of death into a language of life.

LH: *Who are some of your favorite poets, both living and deceased? Which have had the greatest influence on your writing?*

RJ: For me the greatest poet of all time was Ovid, because of the technical things in his poems, the depth of the psychology in them, and the breadth of what he did – an epic, love poems, letter poems, a play (lost), various satires. I also love Horace and Propertius from those times, Dante and Petrarch, Ariosto – and of course all the greats in English. I keep going back to Rilke, Pavese, Montale, Stevens, Williams, Millay. My list of favorites changes daily, especially for the current poets, but I do find myself going back again and again to Gerald Stern, Phil Levine, Jack Gilbert, Linda Gregg, Charles Simic, Mark Strand, James Tate, Tomaz Salamun. Dean Young and Mary Ruefle and Dara Wier are three other names. I read eclectically and could go on here forever. Neruda may have been the best poet of the last century, some say Anna Akhmatova, both great poets. Maybe Lorca. See what I mean?

LH: *Now the question you've been expecting (and possibly dreading) comes up – you know, the one everyone asks, about advice for beginning writers. But I don't*

want to ask that question exactly. Instead, I'd like to know if you have any advice for those who want to teach creative writing someday.

RJ: Marvin Bell once said that the more you do something the better you get at it: that's the best advice. Keep writing – keep reading – most writers often start by imitating. Reading can't be emphasized enough – read a variety – mostly contemporary but a lot of the older folks too. Read across cultures and countries, across genders.

When I teach I think of the class not as a classroom but as a group of writers, myself included, who are not competing but are supportive and want to get better. But also we respect the art enough to be VERY honest, but with reasons. My students at UTC get suspicious if we like what they wrote – they feel the only way to get better is to be very honest and straightforward. It will only make them fall into bad habits to praise what shouldn't be praised. So that's my main advice: be truthful and honest, and offer suggestions for the next step for your students. The other thing is to give them plenty to read – and a variety, because not everything will appeal to everyone, by far. Teaching isn't a popularity contest.

Objects in This Mirror are Closer Than They Appear

Richard Jackson

Because the dawn empties its pockets of our nightmares.

Because the wings of birds are dusty with fear.

Because another war has eaten its way
into the granary of stars. What can console us?

Is there so little left to love? Is belief just the poacher's

searchlight that always blinds us, and memory just

the tracer rounds of desire? Last night,
under the broken rudder of the moon, soldiers

cut a girl's finger off for the ring, then shot her and the boy
who tried to hide under a cloak of woods beyond their Kosovo
town. Listen to me,— we have become words
without meanings, rituals learned from dried

river beds and the cellars of fire-bombed houses.

Excuses flutter their wings. Another mortar round is
arriving from the hills. How long would you say
it takes despair to file down a heart?

When, this morning, you woke beside me, you were mumbling
how yesterday our words seemed to brush over the marsh
grass the way those herons planed over
a morning of ground birds panicking in their nests.

When my father left me his GI compass, telling me
it was to keep me from losing myself, I never thought
where it had led him, or would lead me. Today,
beside you, I remembered simply the way you eat

a persimmon, and thought it would be impossible for each
drop of rain not to want to touch you. Maybe the names
of these simple objects, returning this morning
like falcons, will console us. Maybe we can love

not just within the darkness, but because of it. Ours is
the dream of the snail hoping to leave its track on the moon.
we are sending signals to worlds more distant
than what the radio astronomers can listen for, and yet—

And yet, what? Maybe your seeds of daylight will take root.
Maybe it is for you the sea lifts its shoulders to the moon,
for you the smoke of some battle takes the shape of a tree.
On your balconies of desire, in your alleyways of touch,

each object is a door opening like the luminous face of
a pocket watch. Maybe because of you the stars, too,
desire one another across their infinite,
impossible distances forever, so that it is not

unthinkable that some bird skims the narrow sky where
the sentry fires have dampened, where the soldier, stacking
guns in Death's courtyard, might look up, and remember
touching some story he carries in his pockets, a morning

like this blazing through the keyholes of history, seeing not
his enemy but those lovers, reaching for each other, reaching
towards any of us, their words splintering on the sky,
the gloves of their hearts looking for anyone's hands.

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Cain's Legacy

Richard Jackson

You can't stop the boxcars of despair.
You can't stop my voice from hiding out
like a virus inside your words, their knives
clamped between your teeth. You can't stop
the dogs gnawing on the bones from mass graves.
Thus your mirrors holding other faces. Thus your lungs
filled with someone else's words.
The eyelids of the heart closing. The sky drunk
on vapor trails. Otherwise, a few packages of conscience
to the refugees. You can't stop the sounds
of exploding stars as they approach you.
The anxious triggers. The land mines of idealism.
You can't stop Dismay from stumbling
out of the trenches of your dreams.
You can't stop these ghosts sitting around your table
gnawing on the past. Their candles burn down
to shimmering wounds in their cups.
Everyone holding their favorite flags like napkins.
The sound of bugles spilling from the room like laughter.
I know, you kill what you love just to hate yourself
all the more. You put on the cloak of distance.
A wind that blows away the weeks. The lovers' wilted embrace
that was your only, your last hope.
Everyone his own Judas. After a while
even the moon is just an excuse not to look too closely.
You can't stop the past boiling up in the heart like lava.
Otherwise, a history written by shadows.
For example, someone says the universe is expanding,
more anxious optimism, but where would it expand into?
There's only the vacuum that's always inside us.
There's Stephen Hawking saying the past is pear shaped
but that doesn't feed anyone. You can't stop the brain
of the starving child turning into a peach pit,
not his body terrorizing itself for food,
not his face wrinkling like the orange you leave on your table,
his liver collapsing, the last few muscles snug
over his bones like the tight leather gloves of your debutante.

Otherwise your old lies yawning to wake in the corner.
You can't stop the pieces of the suicide bomber
from splattering all over the cafe walls.
You can't stop the walls the tanks crush from rising again.
Otherwise a few tired rivers, a few fugitive stars.
The seasons that ignore us. The cicadas giving up on us.
Hope's broken antennas. Love trying to slip out of the noose.
The betrayed lives we were meant to live.
You can't stop that town from turning its soul on a spit,
not the light chiseling away desire, the morning
wandering dazed through the underbrush of deception.
You can't stop these sails of tomorrow hanging limp
from their masts. All you have are these backwaters of touch,
this voice spinning like a broken compass,
this muzzle made from your own laws.
But you can't stop the bodies piling up.
You can't stop the deafening roar of the sky.
You can't stop the bullet you've aimed at your own head.

(Winner of a 2004 Pushcart Prize. Reprinted by permission of the author.)

Antigone Today

Richard Jackson

It turns out the whole sky is a wall.
It turns out we all drink from history's footprints.
One day the stones seemed to open like flowers
and I walked over the orphaned ground for my brother.
Even now I can count every barb in the wire.
The stars were covered with sand.
The sandstorm had almost covered the body.
I dug around him, covered him myself.
Today, each memory is a cemetery that must be
tended. You have to stand clear of the briars of anger.
You have to wash revenge from your eyes.
Sophocles kept seeing me as a bird
whose nest is robbed, screeching hysterically.
In another place a flock of birds tear themselves apart
to warn the king of what will happen to his state.
I don't know who I am. I hardly said a word.
I think Sophocles knew what I might mean,
and was afraid. Everything I did was under
one swoop of the owl's wing. Who is anything
in that time? And he never listened.
Even the sentry's words dropped their meanings
and fumbled like schoolboys forgetting their lessons.
What I dug up was a new word for justice,
a whole new dictionary for love. But why did my own
love desert me? He came too late. He was
another foolish gesture from another age. What I tried
to cover with dust was the past, was anger, was revenge.
Now you can see it all in mass graves everywhere.
You can see it in the torture chambers,
the broken mosques and churches, the sniper scopes.
You can see it in the women raped by the thousand.
Who is any one of us in all that?
Who was I? I've become someone's idea of me.
You can no longer read the wax seal of the sun.
The trees no longer mention anything about the wind.
I don't see who could play me later on.

It turns out I am buried myself.
It turns out we are all buried alive
in the chamber of someone else's heart.

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Brett Wise

Wet and Weak Like Today

Cara Iavarone

Today

how do you do me over once and twice again?

Caress such flesh with raindrops maroon.

Seduce me to the windowpane

with your comfort gray fury in the sky.

Today

rain runs down the gutter with swaying hips.

The rhythm of drizzle

puddling in pools beneath a staunch leather boot.

Today

umbrellas squeak open and send reality to flight

and thoughts, Soft and Fat,

slip over the rubber creases in a raincoat blue.

Today

the fog settles in my eyes

and dew collects within my palms.

A wheel on a curb soaks in a wet spray of emotions.

Today

windshield wipers flick my cares of yesterday

to the humid air.

Audacious colors of pinks and stripes, blues and plaids

spottle my sight

as we cower from the lament of a Wednesday mourning.

Oh Self-Pitying Sky,

throw your tantrum and sulk some more

that I may forget my own grief.

The quiet strums of our lives is glassy today

upon the streets.

We are all spilled out and overflowed today

Shivering naked burrowed in over-sized coats and collars

smothering mystery and flashing eyes

in swathed scarves and hoodies
like babes to be ashamed.

Oh beautiful humanity,
I love you when you are wet and weak – like today.

Today
I am proud to be one of you as you scurry
between the outside to peel
off your dampened clothes.

It's all meaningless, isn't it?
Let your black mascara run down your face
so as to like you better world.

I love you life –
ashamed and sad and pitiful
because then you're not so big.

I can see my reflection today
as you spread yourself out from the clouds and
onto my skin
and the soles of my shoes.

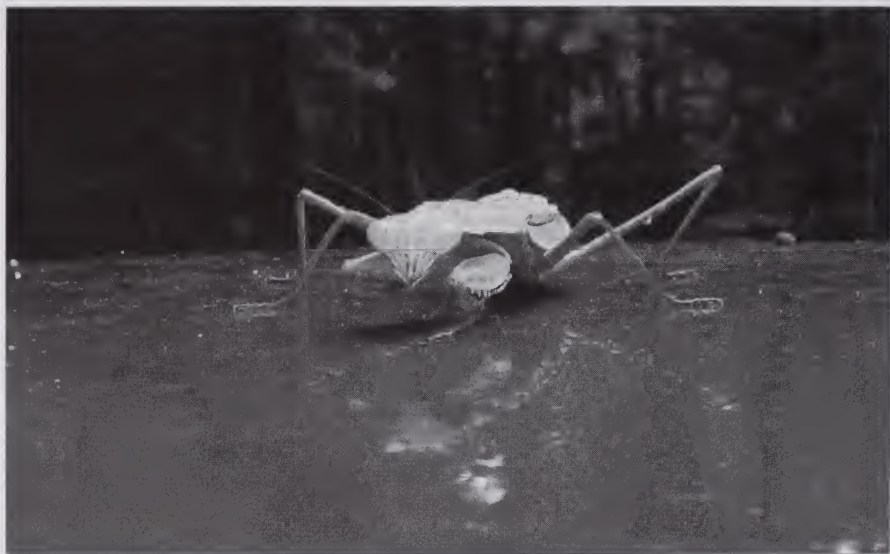
nothing more than holes

Tony Eubank

rattled, I can't breathe.
the weight of their grief kicks me in the chest.
they don't know how beautiful they are.
the light in their eyes could illuminate the entire earth.
instead they sit slouching in their seats,
eyes bloodshot and glazed over.

the shadow of their hurt looms large. and the ever-glistening stars
in the sky are nothing more than holes in their shadow, the radiance
of their spirits peeks through each one.

i can't look at them. i should've run to the sanctuary to pour out
secret tears. i just gaze out the window, into the distance
and imagine something better.



Andrew Seymour

Garden Living

Jordan Duke

To many, a garden bursts with beauty. It is vibrant in color. It is peaceful and relaxing yet abounding with life. A garden is an area of fertile land. Still, it is often overlooked that this area of fertility is only allowed a certain amount of space to grow. A garden is limited. Cement surrounds it and mulch engulfs it. It is a controlled environment. Even the creatures that inhabit this place, as uncontrollable as they may seem, conform. Though this may be a survival strategy for these creatures, it remains a fact that they are deprived of truly living.

In a garden next to the Beach Building just off of Ocoee Street, I make these few observations. The garden is a circular shape divided into four sects by two intersecting cements walkways, the center of which is a block of bricks, and outlined by a cement walkway. Breaking the monotony of the cement are blocks of red brick in which are the names of those who have so generously donated money, and not even lay their own brick, to aid the planting of this garden.

Each section forms the shape of a slice of pizza. Three of the four sections hold twelve plants with some violet and some pale white blooms. They emit a pungent aroma that attracts swarms of bumblebees. Some stand two feet tall, others four, and the height of a few is between those previously mentioned. Many of these plants, however, are parched and over-heated, their petals are falling and the green stems fade to a lighter green and then brown. Around every plant and engulfing the surface of each sector are mulch chips sun-scorched to a light gray. Along the edges near the walkways lay cigarette butts, and a rude odor from unearthed squirrel pellets nearly overpowers the sweet aroma of the flowers' buds. The fourth pizza-shaped area, closest to the Beach Building, houses only five of those plants. This accommodates for a wooden bench supported by steel legs and armrests that sets near the intersecting cement walkways and one giant tree that forks five separate times from the massive trunk.

Looking at the tree from the center of the garden a great, cancerous white blemish covers it, as if it has been bleeding. It runs from an old wound where a branch has been cut off by a chainsaw to the ground. Similar blemishes cover the tree and the highest of its points has been sawed off. There are little to no leaves left on the tree. It is an old and dying wood that can no longer serve to shade, only to house what few squirrels choose to live there. Standing between the garden

and Ocoee street this tree resembles a hand protruding from the earth as if to escape the bondage of the cement encasing.

During the early morning hours birds sing, but never from the old and bleeding tree in the garden. Squirrels scurry up that same tree after gathering their breakfast. They run and jump from the ground to the wood and from branch to branch to escape the shuffling tennis shoes and scuffing sandals across the intersecting walkways. Once all is clear, they scurry back down and gather more food or play what seems to be a game of hide-n-seek around the massive trunk. As a few squirrels venture across Ocoee Street to fill their stomachs one smaller squirrel, perhaps younger than the others, battles within himself whether or not to cross. He takes one step toward the curb, one step back, and one forward again. Suddenly a bright red Chevy truck speeds across the black top, frightening the squirrel back to the garden. It will take this young squirrel a while to realize that he must risk death in order to live. Upon the cement surrounding the garden, an ant hill covers one of the names engraved in a red brick near the grass and ants line up to follow the leader into the hill and through the crevice between the bricks into the soil.

I watch an older gentleman, dressed in a pair of black dress slacks, a white button-up shirt with a red striped tie, and a taupe blazer, walk across one of the intersecting walkways through the garden. From the other intersecting walkway a young man, dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, walks through the garden and calls for his professor. The older man stops and turns to the young man. They stand for a moment and engage in a light and quick conversation about an assignment that was given. Then the gentleman, with his briefcase, makes his way through the garden. The young man, with his books in his right hand, makes his way through the garden and heads to the building where his professor has just come from.

This young man is bound to do only what he is permitted to do; only what he permits himself to do. Work will only let him abide by their rules, their law. School teaches him to think critically but only as critically as they do. He dares not venture out to cross the street. He dares not risk death to live. Rather, he chooses to fall in line and follow those ahead of him, one by one. He dares not face chaos. He runs rampant when it strikes. He has yet to realize that there are too many factors that affect his present state that he has no control over. He embraces conformity, and chooses societal standards over his own, running from himself. Upon realizing this, he will fight even until his

dying days to break through the bondage of his cement encasing. Still, he will rot, his limbs cut apart from him. His beliefs are not his own but stem from the beliefs of his predecessors that stem from the beliefs of their predecessors, and from theirs.

Later that evening, as the sun sets, the anthill seems nothing more than sand kicked across the bricks. Ants swarm in a chaotic panic. The young squirrel stands at the edge of the road while a car passes by, then quickly turns around and runs toward the tree. He jumps from branch to branch. There is a moment of silence and a cricket begins to chirp in place of a morning bird's song. A branch cracks and falls, dead and alone, to the ground as the last rays of the sun break through the horizon, then quickly die themselves and yield to night.

Poem Tea

Erin Jarboe

It's like that tea
you bought in Japan

you pour it straight
into scalding water

you beat it with
a bamboo whisk

you skim your finger
across the froth

you turn the cup
and drink it bitter

you never liked
to sugarcoat things.

A Matter of Perception

Erin Jarboe

There was a girl I once knew.

She was small, and pretty—
and next to her,
I felt tall, and ugly,
and clumsy.

(Then she spoke,
and I felt wise.)

Third Door on the Left

Jason L. Rogers

It's hard to entertain yourself when someone is dying, but that's what I was trying to do. I wasn't allowed to watch television or play cards. I couldn't run outside to play hide-and-go-seek or hit golf balls in the back yard. Someone down the hall was dying, so I just sat there, bored. I couldn't talk to my cousin about my favorite video game. "Not right now," I thought. I knew they wouldn't let me go across the yard to talk to that Mexican girl, Cindy, and there was no chance I was going to get the keys to the tool shed out back so I could ride the golf cart, because I had to sit in the living room while my Grandpa was dying down the hall, third door on the left.

It was the middle of autumn. My grandparents' trailer was hot, even though the air conditioning was running full blast. Their place was typical of retired folks from the North. The kitchen was in the front, and three bedrooms and a couple of bathrooms were in the back. The living room, where I was confined, was in the middle. All the furniture in the living room was placed around an old console TV, covered with framed photographs of their five sons and daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and one great-grandson. A two-foot tall piggy bank in the shape of the local water tower was on the floor next to the TV, and stacks of photo albums sat on the floor on the other side of the television. The walls (the parts that weren't covered in pictures) were cheap, brown paneling. It was ugly, and it had put splinters into my hands dozens of times.

I was hungry, so I whispered to Mom, and she took my sister and me somewhere for a hamburger. I was glad to get away from the heat (we had cold air in the car) and to get away from that place. I turned on the radio in the car, hoping to drown out the sounds of the last few hours: moans... tears... prayers... silence. When I got to the restaurant, I saw normal, happy people eating and talking and laughing at jokes. I knew they would be going home to watch television or going to the park to throw the Frisbee. "I don't want to go back," I thought. "I want to go home, or somewhere, or anywhere but where he's dying." As we drove back from town, I kept hoping he was dead, that somehow he had escaped. Mom parked the car next to the pole with the birdhouse on top that Grandpa had made, and then I walked into a vacuum. There was no conversation, no laughter, and no music. All the life had been drained through a hole in the room at the end of

the hall.

Mom led my sister and me down the narrow hallway. It reeked of cancer and morphine. We passed the extra bedroom (first door on the left) where Grandma kept her stuffed animals on the bed and more pictures on the walls. The smell got stronger. I saw through the partially open door at the end of the hallway. Dad and his brothers sat around the room staring at the floor and the walls, trying not to fill their eyes with too much of what was left of their father. "This may be the last time you see your Grandpa in this life," Mom said. We ducked into the bathroom (second door on the left) as some of my cousins left the room where Grandpa was. It was even hotter in the bathroom and it smelled like toothpaste and hair tonic... his hair tonic.

"I don't want to see him," I thought. "I don't want to see those screams coming out of his mouth." I didn't have to, because he wasn't there. What *was* there was a moving, breathing skeleton on the bed (not Grandpa's bed, the one hospice had left), lying on his side, his sunken eyes squinting one moment, wide with shock the next. My sister and I stood beside him. He was blind with pain. Dad spoke in his ear to let him know who we were. He should have known. We were the only grandchildren still young enough to sit on his lap. He turned partially on his back and mumbled something as he tried to hold our hands. I wanted to pull away. I thought I would drown in the smell. I tried to smile or cry or whatever it was I was supposed to be doing to get it over with, but all I could do was stare at the floor and the walls. I leaned over and hugged him for the last time then followed Mom out of the room.

Dad stayed there while my sister and I went home with mom for the night. He called to let us know that Grandpa was dead. Mom cried on the phone with Dad. My sister went to her room and cried on her bed. I went to our living room and stared at the blank TV and wondered if Mom would get onto me if I watched cartoons.

A few days later we went to the funeral. It was the day before my twelfth birthday. My cousins and I carried the casket into the church and sat on the front row. "I don't want to sit up front," I thought. "People will be watching to see if I cry." I didn't. I tried to make myself, but I couldn't. "What's wrong with me?" I asked myself. "Why can't I cry? Why don't I feel sad? Why don't I feel anything?" When my cousins cried I put my face in my hands and watched what was going on through the gap between my pinky fingers.

Instead of listening to the twenty-third Psalm, I remembered a

joke Grandpa told me about how you catch a unique rabbit. “You ‘nique up on him!” he said as laughter exploded out of his face and mine. While the minister earned his honorarium, I chuckled under my breath at Grandpa’s sneeze. “Froggie!” he’d say as he blew into a red handkerchief. Someone sang a hymn, but all I could hear was Grandpa’s scratchy, tenor rendition of “How Much is that Doggy in the Window?” As I watched Grandma sit across the aisle in tears, I thought of how I would sit on the screened-in front porch at night with the two of them, safe from mosquitoes and rogue Mexican youths.

Everyone stood up and filed around to look at what was in the casket. Grandpa was laughing in the picture someone had placed on the inside of the lid. I didn’t know who was lying there, but looking at the picture I could see the resemblance. I walked as quickly as I could past the man in the casket. Someone behind me took a snapshot of the body. I wanted to scream. I would scream if anyone ever tried to show me that picture.

I carried the casket to the hearse, and then got in the car with my parents and sister. Dad cried while he drove us to the graveyard. Mom held his hand and watched him with a mixture of deep sorrow and an even deeper love. “It didn’t even look like him,” Dad said. “It didn’t even look like my daddy.” I was glad to hear him say what I was thinking, and I reached up from the back seat and put my hand on his shoulder. Dad was hurting, and I felt sad about Grandpa’s death for the first time. I didn’t cry, but if I would have, it would have been okay.

The cousins and I did our job one more time, lifting the casket onto the contraption over the grave. I was glad to be done with it. There wasn’t much strength left in my arms, and I was afraid I’d drop Grandpa. As people gathered close to hear the preacher say some final words, I stood in the sun, wiping the sweat off my face with my sleeve. “Why can’t I sit under the green tent?” I wondered. It was the same green as the carpet on his porch. “I wish I could take off this tie,” I thought. Grandpa only wore ties on Sunday when he went to church. Everyone said, “Amen,” and then stood in line to shake Grandma’s hand or hug her neck. As I waited I wondered how she could be Grandma now without him, without the other person in so many of the pictures that lined her walls and the top of the TV, so many of the pictures that danced in her head.

Grandma’s church had lunch ready for us back at the trailer. “Her trailer now,” I thought. I sat around and ate too much and hoped

the hollow feeling in my stomach would go away. I told some of Grandpa's jokes to my cousins, knowing they had already heard them, and I laughed for the first time in days. I knew it was okay to laugh now; everyone knew it. I laughed at the sign that had been in his kitchen my whole life. "If a man has enough *horse* sense to treat his wife like a *thoroughbred* she'll never turn out to be an old *nag*!"

"You like my sign?" he asked me one day. I was old enough to read but not old enough to understand. He taught me what the sign meant. He taught me a lot of things: how to play chess, how to change a dollar into twenty-one coins, how to hear a quail in the woods ("Bob White?" they ask), how to water plants, how to drive a golf cart entirely too fast without killing yourself. He wore a big straw hat when he worked in the yard. He burned his trash in a big barrel out back, and we both ran when he threw in the hairspray cans. When we were in his tool shed, he stayed far enough away that I felt like an explorer and close enough to make sure I was safe. He raised quails in a pen behind the shed, and Grandma fried them like chicken. He loved Pepsi-cola and vanilla ice cream ("Sure is good cream!" he'd say). He let me shuffle the cards when we played Uno, and let me watch him brush his few remaining teeth before we went to bed.

I sat in the living room, looking at his family. I wondered if everyone was thinking about television or golf or video games or whatever, and I hoped they would remember Grandpa like I did, telling jokes and laughing and working hard and enjoying life, not just as the man in the room at the end of the hall, third door on the left.



Dustin Nicholson

Looking Up

Sharon Ruth Carlson

Above, the leaves are stained-glass
for this tiny, holy moment.
I am sitting silent with the tight pensiveness
of a bent tree
very close to the soft ground
and there are the sounds of humans:
 hammering and humming and flying
 and motors warbling, and children
 shrieking in an outer buzz.
But I haven't heard them for three decades,
an eternal thirty years
I hush them here.

Light burns the thin red leaves
and over by the other house
the magnolia lets nothing through its
thick, shiny fingers

I hear them, and look at the unmoving leaves.
I am always alone.

Man in the Cathedral

Sharon Ruth Carlson

He must have walked into the place as
powerfully as a secret.

The wooden, painted sanctuary with its
etchings of his story
glowed darkly under the murmured welcome
of flickering candles.

We were still with closed eyes, or eyes
drooping, veiled, blinded by the shine of prayer lights.

When he took a breath he drew my eyes.

But of course I could not speak
to tell anyone he was there.

Who would believe he would come to
his own house

on two feet

in a gray business suit, and alone
to look up in silence?

What the Sand Told Me

Mikaela Perron

The sand told me to
run harder
and my body complied.
A man will see this body
soon and catch his breath.
Next time I go dancing
I'll last a little longer
on the floor.
My face will be a little
browner when I get home
from this trip.
The sand made me run
until my body gave out.

Musings from the Center of the Earth

Jacob Stanton

Where will you find it?
Everything you fear yet desire --
how can it be found?
Maybe it's in flight, as you ascend
higher and higher, exploring the planets and their satellites.
Can you find it in space?

Is it found in the texts that you read?
Does that give you answers or does it leave you doubting?
Is it in your dreams?
Dreams of being indestructible, the sole cause of your
enemy's routing.
Or is it in you nightmares?
The fear you can't face, the pain that makes you
hesitate every second you're awake --
embrace it, walk into the fire.
Maybe you'll find peace after the pain
of the pyre.



Jason Rogers

What It Comes Down To: an Interview with Robert Barnett



Dr. Robert Barnett has been a professor of history at Lee University for 10 years. He did his graduate work at Texas Tech, specializing in Russian revolutionary history. He lives in Bradley County with his five beloved children. His band once opened for Pink Floyd. Prior to his arrival at Lee, Barnett was the Chair of the Department of History and the

director of the International Studies Division at Tennessee Wesleyan College. He was also a member of the Russian Bureau of the Tennessee Humanities Council, and Project Evaluator of the Tennessee Humanities Council. Barnett twice received the Faculty/Staff award at Tennessee Wesleyan College, and he also twice received the Lockmiller Teacher of the Year Award. Specializing in the Russian Revolution, Barnett also teaches Modern Europe and Tudor and Stuart England courses, as well as various other history seminars. In 1998, he was the recipient of Lee's Excellence in Advising Award and in 2001 received Lee's Excellence in Teaching Award. He has recently published articles in *The Encyclopedia of History and Biography*, *National Biography*, and *Nineteenth Century*.

Anna Gregson: *I thought to myself, "Who's someone on campus that's interesting, that people would want to hear about?" And you win! So, let's get started. Everyone on campus knows about you. There's this Dr. Barnett stigma – everyone has heard the stories, tells the stories, fights to get into your classes so they can see the legend first-hand. Have you heard the stories?*

Robert Barnett: Yeah, occasionally. Although I think what you find often is that the stories are embellished, and they grow over time. I think the ones that kill me most are the ones that seem to somehow place me in situations where I'm about 110 years old – you know, that I was actually at the D-Day invasion. One of the stories is, of course, that people think I was actually at Woodstock. I guess everyone in my

generation claimed to be at Woodstock, although I wasn't there. Apparently everybody else was. So, I think what happens is that over time, the stories grow. I've been fortunate to have some interesting things happen; some of them have actually been, in my case, more embarrassing than beneficial to me, but I think that it's given my life some dimension. I have heard a few of those stories, and every so often, I have to correct someone and say, "No, that's not really what happened. You've kind of got things out of context."

AG: *Everyone always talks about Dr. Barnett and his connections: "He knows the Prime Minister, he knows everybody who's anybody in Europe."*

RB: Well, one of the things that I have been fortunate in with the program we do in May is that I *do* have people that I know, although no, one of them is not the Prime Minister! I do have a friend who is a very respected and influential member of Parliament who is usually available to speak with our group, and I think that's wonderful. And one of my best friends is the guy who does the trip for us, and now he's doing Cambridge and the trip for psychology and some other things. Connections do help. One of the people that we work with is a gentleman named Dr. Roger Hog, and Roger has been a friend of mine for over 25 years. He is the most English person I know, which is one of the reasons I like having him along. He is just exceptionally English. I think he gives an interesting flavor to the program. He's also highly respected in academia in Europe. He has specialty in the historical literature over there, so he knows a lot about everything. I think he's one of the brightest people I've ever met. Beyond that, though, he's also an individual who has a real zest for life, and I find it really invigorating to be around him. He's a bit older than I am, and while I find myself getting older and being able to say that less and less often, he *is* older than I am. He has recently taken up navigation on the high seas, learned to sail the tall ships, and I had to ask him why he was taking lessons in navigation because, I said, "You don't have a boat," and he said to me, "You never know." Next thing I hear, about a year later, he has signed himself on with his wife – although she was not that happy about it – to do a voyage across the Atlantic to the Caribbean in one of these tall sailing ships. You know, you've got to like people like that. They inspire me, I think, to live life a little more passionately. So really, those are the kind of connections that I have.

All the other opportunities I've had to meet people, frankly, came about just due to the area of my interest and the fact that I did have people in graduate school who were very connected. So we did have British prime ministers who would come and visit our program, and we would have time to talk to them while they were there. We met a lot of interesting people, like there was a man named Simon Wiesenthal; his story was featured in a movie called "The Odessa Files." He became famous as a Nazi hunter. It's interesting to meet people like that, and then, of course, more personally, I was a musician for a long time, and I got to meet people that way as well. I can't say that these are exactly guys who send me Christmas presents, but it is nice to get to meet these people along the way of life. So no, not the Prime Minister, and I'm not being considered for any position in the Bush administration or anything like that either.

AG: *What's this I hear about you and Henry Kissinger?*

RB: Oh, the Henry Kissinger story. [laughs] Now that's a good example of really how sometimes my experiences have been more embarrassing than anything else. When I was in graduate school, we had Henry Kissinger come to speak at our institution, and I think at that time that Henry Kissinger was arguably one of the most powerful men in the world, if not *the* most powerful man. And, well, obviously, most people know that I'm not conservative, and quite honestly, Kissinger stood for everything that I really sort of detested, but nonetheless, it was Henry Kissinger, so it seemed reasonable that if he was going to be there, I would go hear him.

As it turned out, a friend of mine and I, both lowly graduate students, somehow or another, something went wrong and they invited us to the reception honoring Kissinger. So, this friend of mine, his name is Bill Ratliff. Bill was just sure that this was a mistake, and he was, of course, right. He said, "You know, if we try to do this, we're going to get in all kinds of trouble; they'll find us out and we'll be in huge trouble." But I said, "You know, we *were* invited." Now, my motivation to try to get to this reception had really very little to do with Henry Kissinger and a lot more to do with free food, because in those days – and even now – you know free food will always get my attention. So I couldn't really talk Bill into doing this, at least not at first, so we went to this lecture together, and frankly, I found Kissinger to be incredibly condescending. That just convinced me all the more

that we needed to go to this reception because I thought he owed us something for having wasted an hour and a half of our time, so the least we could do was get something to eat out of this thing.

So we end up at this reception, held at the home of this heart surgeon who's a high-profile kind of Republican in Texas. We went in, and Bill was just sure that we were going to get arrested for impersonating some persons who were supposed to be there. We had to go through this whole kind of rigmarole, security stuff, and of course, we didn't look like we fit at all. We finally get in, and clearly these are not our people. There was a string quartet playing on the landing, people are passing through the crowd wearing tails and what looked to me like French maid outfits – those, of course, were the women – carrying flutes of champagne on silver trays; this is not what we were used to. I mean, I never had a doubt that this was a mistake on their part, but I did know that we had these invitations and they might as well be used. So I said, "Okay now, I'm going to go get some food." When we got up closer to the food and noticed that nobody was around, we figured that we shouldn't eat until Kissinger arrived.

We waited awhile, and Henry Kissinger finally did come in, and quite honestly, I was really sort of amazed at how people were trying to impress him. They were gathering around him trying to convince him that they knew an awful lot about global politics and the world situation. I would overhear his responses, and they were actually more in the form of grunts, sort of saying, "Don't bother me; I know far more about it than you do." Well, I wasn't going to talk to him because I wasn't going to humiliate myself that way, so I told Bill that now was a good time to go and get the food. He pointed out that there was still no one at the table, but I figured somebody had to go first, so I went ahead and he reluctantly followed. After we had broken the ice, everybody else came too, and it was a wonderful spread of food, a lot of stuff that I had never even seen before. Of course, in graduate school, my culture had been more that when we got together, somebody went out and got generic potato chips, and we just ripped open the bag and passed it around. But this place had honest to goodness plates and real, good food and tongs to serve yourself.

Well, when I got around to the other side, I was talking to Bill, and he was just hurrying me, so I was kind of looking away. I picked up an hors d'oeuvres fork and stuck it into one of the crab puffs, and I guess I wasn't paying as much attention as I should have been. I looked at Bill, and all the sudden, I saw him just lose all the color in his

face. He just looked like he had seen a ghost or was about to have a stroke – that was probably closer to the truth. I’m trying to figure out what he’s doing and trying to get my crab puff, and I look down and there’s somebody else’s hors d’oeuvres fork in my crab puff. Now, I think it really should be pointed out that that was *my* crab puff. I was there first. In this case, I do believe that the possession of the crab puff is really nine-tenths of the law. I obviously had some sort of interloper. So I looked around to see who it was, and it turned out to be Henry Kissinger. So Henry Kissinger has his hors d’oeuvres fork in *my* crab puff, and I didn’t quite know how to get out of this thing. I thought pretty seriously for a second about just putting my thumb down there and yanking the fork out, but I didn’t think that would be too good. I turn around to get some support from Bill, but Bill is long gone – as a matter of fact, he’s over covering in the corner by the front door, so I’m on my own now. Finally, I get my fork out. When I get over to Bill, who is by this time convinced we’re going to prison – although I don’t really know if you could get jail time for stealing an hors d’oeuvres, no matter how important the guy is – so he says we have to get out of there.

As we’re leaving, he asks me what I said, and I had figured that I was determined not to try to impress him with my knowledge of the world because, you know, I would just be humiliated, and I didn’t want that. He said, “You had to say something, so what’d you say?” And I said, “Well, I just asked him how he thought the Redskins would do this year.” Bill looked puzzled, and I said, “You know, we were talking on the way to the lecture about how you had read that Kissinger was really interested in American football,” to which he replied, “No, we were talking about my *father* being a big football fan and how my *father* likes the Redskins.” So what I thought was actually a really good question to ask Kissinger that would not humiliate me has now become something that I live in sheer terror because of. At some point in his life, Kissinger is going to run out of significant things to say, and he’s going to write a book that will be called *Idiots I Have Met* or perhaps *Fools I’ve Run Into*, and I’m going to be on the cover, kind of smiling stupidly and holding up a mangled crab puff. So that was Kissinger.

Another example of the things that have happened to me that are not the things you should really be proud of: When I was very little, my dad taught at the University of California in Berkeley, and one of his close friends – actually, they went to Stanford– was a man

named Paul Hanna, and every so often, we would drive from Berkeley to Palo Alto to see the Hannas. The Hannas had no children my age, they were all grown, so I used to hate going to that house, just really hate it, because they didn't have any toys and the house was odd and there was nothing to do. I used to really cry and throw fits about having to go, and my parents would make me go.

So one day we were going to go, and I actually remember this pretty well because I was really, really upset. So they dragged me to the car, and we drove out. Well, when we get to the Hanna house, there was, in the front yard, piles of dirt and a bulldozer and stacks of wood and lumber. I'm thinking that this is just like going to Disneyland for a little boy, so they went inside. I'm out in the front just slinging dirt clods and having a grand old time, and out of the corner of my eye, I see this old man – a very unusual-looking guy, I think he was wearing a cape – making his way up to me. At first I didn't pay any attention, but he got closer to me. He came up and took his cane and nudged me in the shoulder and said, "Shoo! Shoo, little boy!" Of course, I was just traumatized and ran screaming into the house. Maybe that accounts for a lot of the strange things about me since the time. But I just couldn't believe that some old man that I'd never seen would do that.

Well, I never really thought much about this until years later when I was in Washington. I was at the American History Museum in the Smithsonian, and they had at the time an exhibit on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. So I was really interested in Wright and really happy to get to go through and see his work, and I don't know why this never dawned on me, but as I go around into one of the rooms dedicated to some of his projects, there's the Paul Hanna house. So, you know, once again, I had this experience of, I would like to say, being bludgeoned and beaten by probably the greatest architect who ever lived, but in fact, that's far more dramatic than what actually happened. I was just nudged away from dirt by a guy one of whose last projects was to remodel a house that he had built decades before. So of course, the reason the Hanna house was odd, or unique, was because it's a Frank Lloyd Wright design. So again, nothing exciting. I don't even have a lawsuit I can bring against the Wright estate. I just happened to be, maybe you want to say, in the wrong place at the wrong time. That's another story people tell about me, but it's nothing I did. I was just throwing dirt clods, and that's what happened.

AG: *Even if people are confused, you obviously have a lot of great experiences. A*

lot of people do wonder, after they hear these stories of your draft-dodging or prime-minister-knowing or anything like that, why you're in this tiny town in Tennessee. What brought you to Lee? What made you stay?

RB: Well, actually, I was called. Not called, in a sense, by God, but called on the phone by Murl Dirksen. They had an opening, and we talked a good deal about things. To be really honest with you, I had a perception of what I thought Lee was about, and I really didn't want to come. I'm basically a Westerner, having lived in California and Colorado and Texas, and I had come to Tennessee but I wasn't really comfortable. I felt that if I was going to go some place, I would go back to the West. On top of everything else, again, having this stereotypical image of what goes on at Lee. You can understand that there were people who actually believed, at the time, that people handled snakes here. I just wasn't sure.

Eventually, I had a chance, after having a number of conversations with Dr. Dirksen and being really impressed with him, I thought it would be all right to work with him. I was really impressed by what I took to be a very real and legitimate concern for building a history program. I was still concerned about fitting in; I mean, I had people who would come to sort of stare at me, which always puts you off. So I came down to see the place and meet the faculty, and I found they were totally different than I expected. We went to lunch, and I just really liked them. I could tell they were going to be really good colleagues, although I imagine they were still concerned about me. I was really quite different. So, that's really what started this whole thing.

I'll be really honest with you, and I certainly don't mean to patronize you by this, but what really keeps me at Lee is that I love the students. I liked students everywhere I taught – that's really one of the great things about teaching. I can't imagine teaching if you didn't like students. But the students at Lee are somehow different, and I'm not going to say it necessarily because of a spiritual thing; I don't really know what it is. You know, I'm aware that people are at different places in their lives and in their spiritual walk, and we're all trying to work something out. Frankly, I like the fact that people are having different questions and things, but I really like the students here. Without sounding overly emotional about it, I mean, I really feel blessed. I like the challenge sometimes of dealing with students who come from a fairly conservative background; I appreciate the fact that even in those cases where they aren't really sure about me, they mostly still realize

that I'm trying to do something to help them. I can tell you, I'm literally blessed every day. I really feel I'm the one who's fortunate here.

The things that I've seen since I've been here in terms of the growth of the campus and enrollment, but particularly in terms of quality programs, I think this is miraculous for a lot of reasons – Dr. Conn's leadership, the arrival of some really talented faculty who have brought all different personalities to Lee. That's all been important, but I think even more than that, we're getting great students. Those students are doing wonderful things. I actually kind of kid students getting into graduate schools in various places that I'm really just trying to create a network so I can just travel around the world and stay free. Actually, that's not a bad idea. Really though, when I came here, there were very few people who really aspired to much. Since then, we've got students who are just going to the best institutions. Our students can compete with anybody, and I think that's something that people need to know. I mean, I appreciate the fact that our mission to a larger extent is kind of to give a chance to people who need a second one, but we also have students who could go any place else, and they choose to be here. I take that very seriously. The diversity, quality, kindness of students – I'm very blessed with great colleagues too, but it really starts for me with the students. That's really why I think I'm here. Last night, we had a symposium, and I watch these guys and am just so proud of them. I tell my students all the time, "You guys are the cream of the crop," and you really are. That's what it comes down to.

The Slaughter House

Megan Vining

An invitation to my emotional death and I repeatedly R.S.V.P. with high hopes of a change. When I arrive, you embrace me with contradicting razors and slice me with blades of expression. You beat me with high expectations, yet leave me with no transportation to soar. You have battered me so brutally that my concussion has blurred my vision, slowing my travels to destiny. You stab me and defense becomes no option because my hands are too weak for a successful weapon. I raise my hands in surrender but you mistake it as retaliation. I fake my last breath so the pain will cease and my heart can rest, but minutes later I can't remember how to make it cease. My tears beg for mercy and my groaning wishes for grace but this is only an act of unreasonable conclusion. You toss me off your mountaintop and I'm left wandering in a valley; no common ground is possible. You've singed me with flames of determination and I'm scorched by your tone. I stagger away more pained than ever, yet looking back for my shadow to confirm reality.

The Hobbyist Historian

Amanda Harrington

Memories scattered across the desk,
their glossy faces reflect the lamp
that lights the solitary figure
who delicately trims away
the less-than-perfect world the pictures show.

Tender moments snapped with care
sometimes the flashbulb overexposing
when mixed with the radiance of the faces.
Or maybe someone not so well-known by the author of the pages
is clipped out, never existing in the world she creates.

Away goes the darkness that surrounds
the couple on their first vacation.
Gone is the white tennis-shoed nurse
standing in the background of
the just born bundle wrapped in blue.

A stencil, scissors, and an acid-free pen
shape the history of what once she knew.
Keeper of photos and heartfelt mementos,
the scrapbooker creates a new life.

Change

Lisa Oresman

Change sits like a crossroad, a secret in the dark
hanging within the reach of those who doubt and ask
their faithlessness flowering at the shape of their task
their skin crawls at the image of pleasure instead of truth
they begin to ask instead of launching their flight
they carry their burdens that overwhelm their pursuit
their eyes pierce & peel back the crawling skin,
transforming burdens again into new sight.



Stephanie Todd

Summer in a Large House

Stephen Haven

They heard at night whatever small complaints
the house had gathered, stored, some eighty years
of them, as if it had arthritis in
each limb, and creaked and cracked in wind, no wind,
the exponential growth of each slight sound
as long as they listened, hearts to the bedded dark.

Or rather *she* heard, and he heard what she heard
when she woke him to it: a chair that scraped
across the hardwood floors, and one night,
she swore, "Oh Suzanna," in hushed tones,
and sent him flashing up the attic stairs
to where, he knew, in years, judging by
the general disrepair, and webs and dust,
the light bulb dead, nothing human had been.
It started his heart working. But when he went
back to their bed, for the sake of sleep he chose
to wish away her fear, what might have been there:
"Nothing," he said, "absolutely nothing."
All night that night, cotton in her ears,
something substantiated by the dark
settled with the mist till the sun burned it off.

Then there was another place she'd never go.
Then, like a sudden itch in deer tick country,
though they found, each long evening, nothing,
the whole of that house crawled with possibility.
Then it seemed she heard her own voice only,
an echo, half an echo, what she once meant
to say, or thought, and had forgotten, and then
beneath its breath the house would utter it.
They burned dried sage, left dishes of tobacco
and mugwort around the doors and windowpanes

and on their porch, though she had never quite
believed before, they hung, lined and starred,
in fourteen different languages the names for God.

And if it somehow steeled them, that tacked-on display,
as if they staked a claim for summer always,
was for each dusk, for each night's moon to say,
or the foghorns lowing lowing each cold morning,
or for the slowest hour of the evening
when far from the sleeping children, he'd slip himself
into a pure abandon. But how could she
make love to him whenever *they* were listening?
Too often the cry that he had hoped to hear
would come in the form of a distant slamming door,
or a voice so low it might as well have not
been there at all. Then always it was night again:
If he slept and didn't stir, still at a word

he held her when she asked, pressed into her
the rote illusion of some distant mass,
the only prayer he knew, of love and dust
and bread, and she recited after him
though neither one could say to what or whom.
And still it pulled, born of the one breath
that bent above them the cypress's silhouette
and drifting, drifting, unseen everywhere,
pitched forever, it seemed to them forever,
dark and near in the warped old eaves of the ear.

(originally published in The Dickinson Review)

Cello

Stephen Haven

I really only learned to play
a movement or two of some
suite for unaccompanied cello.

Mainly etudes in solitude.

Still, my fingers bled for you.
Even off key, my body swayed
from C to A when I bit in

at the base of the bow
and sent in a double stop
the power of some simple Bach

quivering to the top of your scroll!
My cello, between us
it was something physical:

You were a pulsing thing,
a melancholy levity—
drawn hair, thick *largo*—

I hugged between my legs.
My scratchy love,
my public albatross,

I played you only in private
like a fat spouse.
Then, in sixteen years, I never

touched you once, lugged you,
a promise I made to myself
from house to house to house.

When I let you go,
sold you last December
for some unpaid bill or the other,

your absence in my home
was a closet that filled quickly
like a dent in dough.

Now I wish for you what I might wish
for any quick, any crafted instrument:
that some human touch might tap

the slow vibrato of a voice
that hadn't, all those years,
found a voice

and sat there waiting for release
as if it were the seed, the embryo
of all you knew, all that was carved

or strung unsung in you—
hardwood, horsehair,
cat-gut strings,

the pang of hunger
in the belly of a mammal,
sway of the living tree.

(originally published in The Texas Review)

Contributors

Robert Barnett: (see p. 62)

Amanda Rachel Barr is a Music major. She took these pictures when she spent time in Eastern Europe last year. She first became interested in photography as a way of sharing the pain and the beauty that she saw in the lives of the Romanian people. Her time there inspired her as an artist and as a Christian, and instilled in her the desire to capture the essence of the world around her.

Kevin Brown teaches English at Lee University and writes in his rapidly dwindling free time. He has published poems and articles on movies and literature in *Jeopardy*, *Pinyon*, *The Pacific Review*, *Nebo*, *h2so4*, *24framespersecond*, and *Eclectica*, among other journals.

Ashley Katherine Denning is a second-semester freshman pursuing a BA in English with a minor in Christian Education. Her future dreams are to be a wife and mother, to have a writing ministry, as well as other various forms of ministry. She wrote "The Harsher Side of Motherhood" from a mother's heart, even though she doesn't have any kids yet. The job is not glamorous, but the rewards are divine, priceless, eternal.

Cara Edenfield is a junior and an English major. She would like to continue to write and inspire passion for literature and art. She is unpublished except for the Lee Review. Her poetry tends to center around the marginalized and mute in American society, attempting to bring their experience into the consciousness of the reader.

Tony Eubank is originally from Crawfordsville, Indiana and is currently a communications/media writing major, in something like his junior year. he likes to frown and whistle at the same time. sounds silly, but try it some time. it ain't easy. "nothing more than holes" was written about a late night out with some friends who seemed to have lost track of their self worth.

Amanda Harrington is majoring in English, with a minor in Writing, at Lee University. She plans to specialize in British literature in graduate school and hopes to become a professor and author.

Stephen Haven is Professor of English at Ashland University, where he edits the Ashland Poetry Press, teaches American literature, and co-directs the Creative Writing Program. His book of poems, *The Long Silence of the Mohawk Carpet Smokestacks*, was published by West End Press in 2004 and is distributed by the University of New Mexico Press. His poetry has appeared in *Crazyhorse*, *American Poetry Review*, *Salmagundi*, *Image*, *Western Humanities Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *The Clackamas Literary Review*, and in many other journals. He has a Ph.D. in American Civilization at New York University. His dissertation was written under the direction of Harold Bloom. Haven also has an M.F.A. in Poetry from the University of Iowa, and has twice been a Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature (Poetry) at universities in Beijing. He has won three individual artist fellowships and one residency grant (at the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center), from the Ohio Arts Council. Haven is the editor of *The Poetry of W.D. Snodgrass: Everything Human* (University of Michigan Press, 1993), and of two anthologies of contemporary American poetry.

Cara Iavarone is a junior at Lee University and is excited at the prospect of continuing her major in Anthropology and Writing. Though no one can say how God will ultimately unfold a life, she finds her heart has always longed to work internationally for justice. She is open to whatever country, people, or facet that may entail. Wherever she goes, she prays that God will open her eyes to the beautiful literature inscribed in all of His creation – even if it’s something as simple as trudging through a rainy Wednesday morning.

Richard Jackson: (see p. 29)

Amber D. Noel is a junior interdisciplinary major who likes to include a middle initial in her biographies for purely pompous reasons. She is from many places (mostly Ohio), but plans to return someday to New England. *Lee Review* contains her first published material.

Serah Wanjiru Njoroge is a Telecommunications major/Journalism minor at Lee University. She hopes to work in the media as a news anchor and writer. She would also like to go into show hosting. She wrote the poem, “Safari,” because she finds beauty in all nature and all creations. She thinks that if we take the time to observe nature we can learn the beauty of life.

Lisa K. Oresman is an English Education Major at Lee University. She plans to work in South America after graduation, teaching English. She also plans to pursue graduate work in linguistics. She wrote “Change” while in Quito, Ecuador last summer. She was learning and experiencing many new things, and this poem was a way of dealing with the newness.

Mikaela Perron is an English major. She aspires to rule you.

Jason L. Rogers is 30 years old and is married to Cara, who gave birth to their daughter, Lillian, in December of 2004. He is a junior and is studying English and Writing. He is pursuing a career in the arts, including creative and nonfiction writing, photography, and music.

Jacob Stanton is a 21 year-old English Education major from Indianapolis, IN. He enjoys literature, politics, comic books, and theology, among other things.

Claire Sulser attends Asbury College and is a Media Communications major with a minor in Equine Management. She hopes to train horses for film, be a stunt rider, and perhaps become a film director further down the road. This is her first publication, and she is excited to be published in *Lee Review*.

Stephanie Todd is a senior majoring in Youth Ministry with teacher certification in Bible for 7th-12th grade. She hopes to either work as a youth leader with a church youth group or to teach high school Bible and coach softball and/or volleyball. She will be student teaching this fall in Honduras or Guatemala and will graduate in December.

Megan Vining is a junior pursuing a degree in Psychology and a minor in Counseling. With this degree, Megan will follow her calling in the field of inner-city ministry. Currently, she is employed at the Harbor Safe House, a domestic violence and rape shelter for women and children. She will be married in the spring of 2006. “The Slaughter House” refers to the clients she deals with at work who have been victims of verbal abuse. She hopes that, in reading this piece, one will become more aware of how painful verbal abuse can be.

Jonathon Wilson is a newly declared English major with a minor in writing. The majority of his stories, including “What A Good Son Does,” are loosely based on childhood experiences as a Pentecostal pastor’s child. His goal is to put together a manuscript for a collection of short stories by graduation and be accepted to an MFA program in creative writing.

Brett D. Wise is from Williams Junction, AR. He is double-majoring in Bible and Theology/History, with a minor in Biblical Languages. His aim is to take what people see everyday and to see it differently. He tries to photograph things that say something to him. He can only shoot the things that catch his eye and hope that other people enjoy it too. If there is one thing that he tries to convey with photography as an artistic medium, it is feeling or emotion.

Sabord Woods is a thirty-eight-year veteran on the Lee University faculty whose main pursuit has been teaching and reading and research important to good teaching. He has read papers at professional meetings, published one article and done some religious journalism for the Church of God denomination. He also has a strong interest in music and does accompaniment at the keyboard for worship, but also loves to work (or play) at classical pieces. He loves to read mystery novels for fun, as well as theology, philosophy, and literature of all kinds for personal and professional development. He writes poems occasionally and hopes to have much time to work at various writing once he retires.

Special Thanks

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"I WOULD HURL INTO THE DARKNESS AND WAIT FOR
AN ECHO, AND IF AN ECHO SOUNDED, NO MATTER
HOW FAINTLY, I WOULD SEND OTHER WORDS TO TELL,
TO MARCH, TO FIGHT, TO CREATE A SENSE OF
HUNGER FOR LIFE THAT GNAWS IN US ALL."

RICHARD WRIGHT, NOVELIST



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Elaine, Arkansas 72333

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